

Notes and Comments.

Church Extension. It is the experience of other churches that they enjoy the greatest blessings when their efforts are directed to missionary work, both home and foreign. The very life of the church depends upon what she does for those beyond the limits of her own bounds. The following from the *Outlook*, tho lengthy is well worth reading, as showing the importance of directing our own efforts along the line of Church Extension:

The Church Extension Society is now an indispensable part of the machinery of every well organized, aggressive denomination in this country. Some Churches have peculiar methods by which they operate this important machinery. The first Sunday in September was the time of the annual offering for Church Extension among the Disciples of Christ, and Secretary G. W. Muckly has for several weeks filled their church papers with many ingenious illustrations picturing the way Church Extension works. He demonstrates the utility of his Society by a geometrical figure, the Church Extension switchboard, the Ferris wheel, or the banyan-tree. The importance of this movement is indicated by the view of Bishop C. C. McCabe, for sixteen years Secretary of the Methodist Board of Church Extension, who in a recent interview said: "If anyone should ask me what was the greatest movement in the history of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the last twenty-five years, I would answer, it was when A. J. Kynett, of Iowa, arose in the General Conference of 1864 and proposed the organization of a Church Extension Society. The work of that Society has contributed more than the work of any other society to the fine increase of Methodism in the past thirty years. The past thirty years have been years of victory for our Church. In 1868 we had only 928,000 communicants; in 1895 we had 2,750,000, a gain of over 1,300,000. I attribute this gain more to the labors of the Church Extension Society than to any other one cause. Through its work we have had churches to gather our people into upon the Western frontier, and in the South, and every where. I believe the time will come when the Methodist Episcopal Church will have a loan fund of ten million dollars, and will be able to build a church wherever one is needed between the gates of hell and the gates of heaven." In order to accomplish the work for which our Church Extension Societies were formed, we need (1) *Church attention*, to the great churchless world; (2) *Church intention*, to send the necessary means to house the poor for worship, and then *Church extension* will bless the ends of the earth.

"Ninety and Nine." This is said to be Mr. Sankey's most famous hymn. No doubt all of our readers are acquainted with both the words and the music of the hymn, "Ninety and Nine," and will be interested to learn of its origin. We take the following from an *Exchange*:

At a great gathering recently in Denver, Mr. Ira W. Sankey, before singing "The Ninety and Nine," which perhaps of all his compositions is the one that has brought him the most fame, gave an account of its birth. Leaving Glasgow for Edinburgh with Mr. Moody, he stopped at a newsstand and bought a penny religious paper. Glancing over it as they rode on the cars, his eyes fell upon a few little verses in the corner of the page. Turning to Mr. Moody, he said, "I've found my hymn." But Mr. Moody was busily engaged and

did not hear a word. Mr. Sankey did not find time to make a tune for the verses, so he pasted them in his music scrap-book. One day they had an unusually impressive meeting in Edinburgh, in which Dr. Bonar had spoken with great effect on "The Good Shepherd." At the close of the address, Mr. Moody beckoned to his partner to sing something appropriate. At first he could think of nothing but the Twenty-third Psalm, but that he had sung so often; his second thought was to sing the verses he had found in the newspaper, but the third thought was, How could it be done when he had no tune for them? Then a fourth thought came, and that was to sing the verses, anyway. He put the verses before him, touched the keys of the organ, opened his mouth and sang, not knowing where he was going to come out. He finished the first verse amid profound silence. He took a long breath and wondered if he could sing the second the same way. He tried it and succeeded. After that it was easy to sing it. When he finished the hymn the meeting was all broken down—the throngs were crying and the ministers were sobbing all around him. Mr. Sankey says it was the most intense moment of his life. From that moment it was a popular hymn. Mr. Moody said at the time that he had never heard a song like that. It was sung at every meeting and was soon going over the world. While traveling in the Highlands of Scotland a short time later, Mr. Sankey received a letter from a lady at Melrose, thanking him for singing the verses written by her sister. That sister was Elizabeth C. Clephane. He wished to call it "The Lost Sheep," but Mr. Moody insisted upon calling it "Ninety and Nine" whenever he announced it. Mr. Sankey firmly believes that God inspired him to sing that song with such effect, and the honor should be His.

A Large Order. It is said that the Funk & Wagnalls Company of New York, has received an order from one firm for 100,000 copies of its celebrated Standard Dictionary of the English Language. At retail this order would amount to about \$1,250,000. The sales of this work, previous to this order, have reached above 100,000 copies, with many large orders coming in from the company's agents all over the world. The book cost the company \$960,000 before a single copy was ready for the market. It was a gigantic undertaking in book making and the company is meeting with deserved success.

The Most Significant Word. Endearing and significant as are the words "mother" and "home," there is another word infinitely more comprehensive in its character. It is the word, "God." Who can tell the meaning of this word? It is a word of but three letters, and yet among all the words in the English language there is no other word so all-inclusive as the word "God." The following from the *Christian Advocate* is suggestive:

A man who has made a great name for himself in the realm of electrical investigation during the last few years was recently asked to indicate what he considered the most significant word in our language. His answer was, "Nature." Perhaps such a reply was to be expected from a man whose scientific insight is keener than his spiritual insight, because the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." A word of greater significance than "nature," it will be readily admitted, because of its all-inclusive char-

acter, is "God." The mechanism may be marvelous and its power immeasurable, but who would seriously regard the machine as being greater than its builder? "Nature" is a word of wonderfully expansive application. New discoveries are being made in its rich fields, which are crowded with eager and devoted prospectors. Nature is indeed marvelous, but what man of intelligence toiling in the realms of nature can compel himself to believe that the things created are greater than the Being that created them? "Nature" is a great and significant word; but "God" is infinitely greater and infinitely more significant, and many men who have wrested great secrets from nature have acknowledged the supremacy of the latter with a devotion and humility that might serve as an example to those modern investigators who seem to be disposed to substitute nature for God.

Queries and Answers.

No. 1. Is it possible that baptism is not one of the saving ordinances and sin-pardoning commands? Do not the Brethren baptize for the remission of sins?

The Brethren Church teaches that baptism is for the remission of sins according to Acts 2:38. The statement that baptism is a "saving ordinance," must be received with some limitations. There are many baptized persons who are not saved. Baptism is a means of grace, which, when observed according to the directions of the Master has the promise of pardon. To ask whether one *must* be baptized in order to be saved is to our mind a very foolish question. The more important and more proper question is, *may* I be baptized and receive the blessing promised to the obedient.

No. 2. Hearing of the Brethren Church and wishing to unite with some Gospel Church, I wish to ask some plain questions to which I desire answers that can only be taken one way. 1. What questions are in the confession? 2. What is the dress, beard and hair ruling if any? 3. Do you eat a full meal in connection with the footwashing and communion? 4. Do you have Annual Meetings as the German Baptists do? 5. What in regard to the covering? 6. Do you anoint the sick?

To the above questions we record the following answers for the information of our querist, who, seemingly desires to know the whole truth. 1. Only one that we know of—a confession of faith in the Lord Jesus and his power to save. 2. On the dress question we teach just what Christ taught—nothing. As to the wearing of the hair, we have no ruling but that given by Paul: It is a shame for a man to wear long hair. 3. Yes. 4. The Brethren Church holds annual Conferences, but the General Conference is not a law-making body, it is advisory only. 5. Just what Paul teaches in the eleventh chapter of Corinthians. 6. Yes.